

Launch Propulsion Systems

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National Aeronautics and Space Administration

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Description:

Launch Propulsion Systems reflects a staged development of critical technologies that include both "pull" technologies that are driven by known short- or long-term agency mission milestones, as well as "push" technologies that generate new performance or mission capabilities over the next 20 to 25 years. While solid and liquid propulsion systems are reaching the theoretical limits of efficiency, they have known operational and cost challenges while continuing to meet critical national needs. Improvements in these launch propulsion systems and their ancillary systems will help maintain the nation's historic leadership role in space launch capability. Newer technologies like air-breathing launch propulsion, unconventional, and other propulsion technologies and systems, while low in TRL, can radically transform the nation's space operations and mission capabilities and can keep the nation's aerospace industrial base on the leading edge of launch technologies.